

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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## A CHARMING FELLOW.

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### CHAPTER XVIII.

On the day following the dinner at Lord Seely's, Algernon received a card, importing that Mrs. Machyn-Stubbs would be at home that evening.

Of the lady he knew nothing, except that she was an elder sister of young Pawkins, of Pudcombe Hall; and that her family, who were people of consideration in Whitford and its neighbourhood, thought *Jemima* to have made a good match in marrying Mr. Machyn-Stubbs. In giving him the letter of introduction, Orlando Pawkins had let fall a word or two as to the position his sister held in London society.

"I can't send anybody and everybody to the Machyn-Stubbs's," said young Pawkins. "In their position, it wouldn't be fair to inflict our bucolic magnates on them. But I'm sure *Jemima* will be very glad to make your acquaintance, old fellow."

Algernon was quite free from arrogance. He would have been well enough contented to dine with Mr. Machyn-Stubbs, had that gentleman been a grocer or a cheese-monger. And, in that case, he would probably have derived a good deal of amusement from any little vulgarities which might have marked the manners of his host, and would have entertained his genteeler friends by a humorous imitation of the same. But he was not in the least overawed by the prospect of meeting Mrs. Machyn-Stubbs, and was

quite aware that he probably owed his introduction to her, to young Pawkins's knowledge of the fact that he was Lady Seely's relation.

Algernon betook himself to the house of Mrs. Machyn-Stubbs, in the fashionable neighbourhood before mentioned, about half-past ten o'clock, and found the small reception-rooms already fuller than was agreeable. Mrs. Machyn-Stubbs received him very graciously. She was a pretty woman, with a smooth fair face and light hair, and she was dressed with as much good taste as was compatible with the extreme of the prevailing fashion. She smiled a good deal, and was quite destitute of any sense of humour.

"So glad to see you, Mr. Errington," said she, when Algernon had made his bow. "You and Orlando are great friends, are you not? You must let me make you acquainted with my husband." Then she handed Algernon over to a stout, red-faced, white-haired gentleman, much older than herself, who shook hands with him, said, "How d'ye do?" and "How long have you been in town?" and then appeared to consider that he had done all that could be expected of him in the way of conversation.

"I suppose you don't know many people here, Mr. Errington?" said Mrs. Machyn-Stubbs, seeing that Algernon was standing silent in the shadow of her husband.

"Not any. You know I have never been in London before."

"Haven't you, really? But perhaps we may have some mutual acquaintances notwithstanding. Let me see who is here!" said the lady, looking round her rooms.

"Are you acquainted with the Dormers, Mrs. Machyn-Stubbs?"

"The Dormers? Let me see——"

"General and Lady Harriet Dormer."

"Oh! no; I don't think I am. Of course I must have met them. In the course of the season, sooner or later, one meets everybody."

"Do you know Miss Kilfinane?"

"Miss Kilfinane? I—I can't recall at this moment——"

"She is a sort of connection of mine; not a relation, for she is Lord Seely's niece, not my lady's."

"Oh, to be sure! You are a cousin of Lady Seely. Yes, yes; I had forgotten. But Orlando did mention it."

In truth, the fact of Algernon's relationship to Lady Seely was the only one concerning him which had dwelt in Mrs. Machyn-Stubbs's memory. Presently she resumed:

"I should like to introduce you to a great friend of ours; the most delightful creature! I hope he will come to-night, but he is very difficult to catch. He is a son of Lord Mullingar."

"What, Jack Price?"

"Oh, you know him, do you?"

"Only by reputation. He was to have dined at Lord Seely's last night, when I was there. But he didn't show."

"Oh, I know he's dreadfully uncertain. But I must say, however, that he is generally very good about coming to me. It's quite wonderful, I'm sure. I don't know why I am so favoured!"

Then Algernon was presented to a rather awful dowager, with two stiff daughters, to whom he talked as well as he could; and the nicest looking of whom he took into the tea-room, where there was a great crush, and where people trod on each other's toes, and poked their elbows into each other's ribs, to procure a cup of hay-coloured tea and a biscuit that had seen better days.

"Upon my word," thought Algernon, "if this is London society, I think Whitford society better fun." But then he reflected that Mrs. Machyn-Stubbs was not a real leader of fashionable society. She was not quite a rose herself, although she lived near enough to the roses for their scent to cling, more or less faintly, about her garments. He was not bored, for his quick powers of perception, and lively appreciation of the ludicrous, enabled him to gather considerable amusement from the scene. Especially did he feel amused and in his element when, on an allusion to his cousinship to Lady Seely,

thrown out in the airiest, most hap-hazard way, the awful dowager and the stiff daughters unbent, and became as gracious as temperament in the one case, and painfully tight stays in the other, permitted.

"He's a very agreeable person, your young friend, Mr. Ancram Errington," said the dowager, later on in the evening, to Mrs. Machyn-Stubbs.

"Oh yes; he's very nice indeed. He is a great favourite with my people. He half lives at our place, I believe, when Orlando is at home."

"Indeed! He is—a—a—connected with the Seelys, I believe, in some way."

"Second cousin. Lady Seely was an Ancram—Warwickshire Ancrams, you know," returned Mrs. Machyn-Stubbs, who knew her Peerage nearly by heart. Whereupon the dowager went back to her daughter, by whose side, having nothing else to do, Algernon was still sitting, and told him that she should be happy to see him at her house in Portland-place any Friday afternoon, between four and six o'clock, during the season.

Presently, when the company was giving forth a greater amount and louder degree of talk than had hitherto been the case—for Herr Doppeldaum had just sat down to the grand piano—Algernon's quick eyes perceived a movement near the door of the principal drawing-room, and saw Mrs. Machyn-Stubbs advance with extended hand, and more eagerness than she had thrown into her reception of most of the company, to greet a gentleman who entered with a kind of plunge, tripping over a bear-skin rug that lay before the door, and dropping his hat.

He was a short, broad-chested man, with a bald forehead and a fringe of curly chestnut hair round his head. He was evidently extremely near-sighted, and wore a glass in one eye, the effort of keeping which in its place occasioned an odd contortion of his facial muscles. He was rubicund, and looked like a man who might grow to be very stout later in life. At present he was only rather stout, and was braced, and strapped, and tightened, so as to make the best of his figure. His dress was the dress of a dandy of that day, and he wore a fragrant hot-house flower in his button-hole.

"That must be Jack Price!" thought Algernon, he scarcely knew why; and the next moment he got away from the dowager and her daughters, and sauntered towards the door.

"Oh, here is Mr. Errington," said Mrs. Machyn-Stubbs, looking round at him as he made his way through the crowd. "Do let me introduce you to Mr. Price. This is Mr. Ancram Errington, a great friend of my brother Orlando. You have met Orlando, I think?"

"Oh, indeed, I have!" said Mr. Jack Price, in a rich sweet voice, and with a very decidedly marked brogue. "Orlando is one of my dearest friends. Delightful fellow, what? Orlando's friend must be my friend, if he will, what?"

The little interrogation at the end of the sentence meant nothing, but was a mere trick. The use of it, with a soft rising inflection of Mr. Jack Price's very musical voice, had once upon a time been pronounced to be "captivating" by an enthusiastic Irish lady. But he had not fallen into the habit of using it from any idea that it was captivating, nor had he desisted from it since all projects of captivation had departed from his mind.

"I was to have met you at dinner, last night, Mr. Price," said Algernon, shaking his proffered hand.

"Last night? I was,—where is it I was last night? Oh, at the Blazonvilles! Yes, of course, what? Why didn't you come, then, Mr. Errington? The Duke would have been delighted—perfectly charmed, to see you!"

"Well, that may be doubtful, seeing that I cannot flatter myself that his Grace is even aware of my existence," said Algernon, looking at Mr. Price with twinkling eyes, and his mouth twitching with the effort to avoid a broad grin.

Jack Price looked back at him, puzzled and smiling. "Eh? How was it then, what? Was it—it wasn't me, was it?"

Algernon laughed outright.

"Ah now, Mr.—Mr.—my dear fellow, where was it that you were to have met me?"

"My cousin, Lady Seely, was hoping for the pleasure of your company, Mr. Price. She was under the impression that you had promised to dine with her."

Jack Price fell back a step and gave himself a sounding slap on the forehead. "Good gracious goodness!" he exclaimed. "You don't mean to say that?"

"I do, indeed."

"Ah, now, upon my honour, I am the most unfortunate fellow under the sun! I don't know how the deuce it is that these kind of misfortunes are always happening to me. What will I say to Lady

Seely? She'll never speak to me any more, I suppose, what?"

"You should keep a little book and note down your engagements, Mr. Price," said Mrs. Machyn-Stubbs, as she walked away to some other guest.

Mr. Price gave Algernon a comical look, half rueful, half amused. "I don't quite see myself with the little book, entering all my engagements," said he. "I daresay you've heard already from Lady Seely of my sins and shortcomings?"

"At all events, I have heard this: that whatever may be your sins and shortcomings, they are always forgiven."

"I am afraid I bear an awfully bad character, my dear Mr.—"

"Errington; Ancram Errington."

"To be sure! Ah, I know your name well enough. But names are among the things that slip my memory. It is a serious misfortune, what?"

Then the two began to chat together. And when the crowd began to diminish, and the rattle of carriages grew more frequent down in the street beneath the drawing-room windows, Jack Price proposed to Algernon to go and sup with him at his club. They walked away together, arm in arm, and, as they left Mrs. Machyn-Stubbs's doorstep, Mr. Price assured his new acquaintance that that lady was the nicest creature in the world, and one of his dearest friends; and that he could take upon himself to assert that Mrs. Machyn-Stubbs would be only too delighted to receive him (Algernon) at any time and as often as he liked. "It will give her real pleasure, now, what?" said Jack Price, with quite a glow of hospitality on behalf of Mrs. Machyn-Stubbs. Then they went to Mr. Price's club. It was neither a political club, nor a fashionable club, nor a grand club; but a club that was widely miscellaneous, and decidedly jolly. Algernon, before he returned to his lodging that night, had come to the opinion that London was, after all, a great deal better fun than Whitford. And Jack Price, when he called upon Lady Seely the next day, to make his peace with her, declared that young Errington was, really now, the most delightful and dearest boy in the world, and that he was quite certain that the young fellow was most warmly attached to Lord and Lady Seely.

All this was agreeable enough. And Algernon would have been content to go on in the same way to the end of the

London season, had it been possible. But careless as he was about money, he was not careless about the luxuries which money supplies. Certainly, if tradesmen and landlords could only be induced to give unlimited credit, Algernon would have had none the less pleasure in availing himself of their wares, because he had not paid for them in coin of the realm. But as to doing without, or even limiting himself to an inferior quality and restricted quantity, that was a matter about which he was not at all indifferent. He was received on a familiar footing in the Seelys' house; and his reception there opened to him many other houses, in which it was more or less agreeable and flattering to be received. Among the Machyn-Stubbsees of London society he was looked upon as quite a desirable guest, and received a good deal of petting, which he took with the best grace in the world. And all this was, as has been said, pleasant enough. But, as weeks went on, Algernon's money began to run short; and he soon beheld the dismal prospect ahead—and not very far ahead—of his last sovereign. And he was in debt.

As to being in debt, that had nothing in it appalling to our young man's imagination. What frightened him was the conviction that he should not be permitted to go on being in debt. Other people owed money, and seemed to enjoy life none the less. Mr. Jack Price, for instance, had an allowance from his father, on which no one pretended to expect him to live. And he appeared very comfortable and contented in the midst of a rolling sea of debt, which sometimes ebbed a little, and sometimes flowed alarmingly high; but which, during the last ten years or so, he had managed to keep pretty fairly at the same level. But then Mr. Price was the Honourable John Patrick Price, the Earl of Mullingar's son—a younger son, it was true; and neither Lord Mullingar, nor Lord Mullingar's heir, was likely to have the means, or the inclination, to fish him out of the rolling sea aforesaid. At the most, they would throw him a plank now and then, just to keep him afloat. Still there was something to be got out of Jack Price by a West-end tradesman who knew his business. Something was to be got in the way of money, and, perhaps, something more in the way of connection. Upon the whole, it may be supposed that the West-end tradesmen understood what they were

about, when they went on supplying the Honourable John Patrick Price with all sorts of comforts and luxuries, season after season.

But with Algernon the case was widely different, and he knew it. He had ventured to speak to Lord Seely about his prospects, and to ask that nobleman's "advice." But Lord Seely had not seemed able to offer any advice which it was practicable to follow. Indeed, how should he have done so, seeing that he was ignorant of most of the material facts of the case? He knew in a general way that young Ancram (Algernon had come to be called so in the Seely household) was poor; but between Lord Seely's conception of the sort of poverty which might pinch a well-born young gentleman, who always appeared in the neatest-fitting shoes and freshest of gloves, and the reality of Algernon's finances, there was a wide discrepancy. Algernon had indeed talked freely, and with much appearance of frankness, about his life in Whitford; but it may be doubted whether Lord Seely, or his wife either—although she, doubtless, came nearer to the truth in her imaginings on the subject—at all realised such facts as that Mrs. Errington had no maid to attend on her; that her lodgings cost her eighteen shillings a week; and that the smell of cheese from the shop below was occasionally a source of discomfort in her only sitting-room.

With Lord Seely, Algernon had made himself a great favourite. And the proof of it was, that my lord actually thought about him when he was absent; and one day said to his wife, "I wish, Belinda, that we could do something for Ancram."

"Do something for him. I think we do a great deal for him. He has the run of the house, and I introduce him right and left. And he is always asked to sing when we have people."

"That latter looks rather like his doing something for us, I think."

"Not at all. It's a great advantage for a young fellow in his position to be brought forward, and allowed to show off his little gifts in that way."

"He is wasting his time. I wish we could get him something to do."

"I am sure you have plenty of claims on you that come before him."

"I—I did speak to the Duke of Blazonville about him the other day," said my lord, with the slightest hesitation in the world.

The Duke of Blazonville was in the



cabinet, and had been a colleague of Lord Seely's years ago.

"What on earth made you do that, Valentine? You know very well that the next thing the duke has to give, I particularly want for Reginald."

"Oh, but what I should ask for young Ancram would be something at which your nephew Reginald would probably—"

"Turn up his nose?"

"Something which Reginald would not care about taking."

"Reginald wouldn't go abroad, except to Italy. Nor, indeed, anywhere in Italy but to Naples."

"Exactly. Whether the duke would consider that he was particularly serving the interests of diplomacy by sending Reginald to Naples, I don't know. But, at all events, Ancram could not interfere with that project."

"Serving——? Nonsense! The duke would do it to oblige me. As to Ancram, I have latterly had a kind of plan in my head about Ancram."

"About a place for him?"

"Well, yes; a place, if you like to call it so. What do you say to his coming abroad with us in the autumn?"

"Eh? Coming abroad with us?"

"Of course we should have to pay all his expenses. But I think he would be amusing, and perhaps useful. He talks French very well, and is lively and good-tempered."

"I have no doubt he would be a most charming travelling companion——"

"I don't know about that. But I should take him out of kindness, and to do him a service."

"But I don't see of what use such a plan would be to him, Belinda."

"Well, I've an idea in my head, I tell you. I have kept my eyes open, and I fancy I see a chance for Ancram."

"You are very mysterious, my dear!" said Lord Seely, with a little shrug.

"Well, least said, soonest mended. I shall be mysterious a little longer. And, meanwhile, I think we might make him the offer to take him to Switzerland with us, since you have no objection."

"I have no objection, certainly."

"I think I shall mention it to him, then. And, if I were you, I wouldn't bother the duke about him just yet."

"But what is this notion of yours, Belinda?"

The exclamation rose to my lady's lips, "How inquisitive men are!" but she

suppressed it. It was the kind of speech which particularly angered Lord Seely, who much disliked being lumped in with his fellow-creatures on the ground of common qualities. Even a compliment, so framed that my lord was supposed to share it with a number of other persons, would have displeased him. So my lady said, "Well, now, Valentine, you'll begin to laugh at me, very likely, but I believe I'm right. I think Castalia is very well inclined to like this young fellow. And she might do worse."

"Castalia! Like him? Why, you don't mean——?"

"Yes, I do," returned my lady, nodding her head. "That's just what I do mean. I'm sure, the other evening, she became quite sentimental about him."

"Good heavens, Belinda! But the idea is preposterous."

"Yes; I knew you'd say so at first. That's why I didn't want to say anything about it just yet awhile."

"But allow me to say that, if you had any such idea in your head, it was only proper that it should be mentioned to me."

"Well, I have mentioned it."

Lord Seely clasped his hands behind his back, and walked up and down the room in a stiff, abrupt kind of march. At length he stopped opposite to her ladyship, who was assiduously soothing Fido; Fido having, for some occult reason, become violently exasperated by his master's walking about the room.

"Why, in the first place——do send that brute away," said his lordship, sharply.

"There! he's quiet now. Good Fido! Good boy! Mustn't bark and growl at master. Yes; you were saying——?"

"I was saying that, in the first place, Castalia must be ten years older than this boy."

"About that, I should say. But if they don't mind that, I don't see what it matters to us."

"And he has not any means, nor any prospect of earning any, that I can see."

"Why, for that matter, Castalia hasn't a shilling in the world, you know. We have to find her in everything, and so has your sister Julia, when Castalia goes to stay with her. And if these two could set their horses together——could, in a word, make a match of it——why, you might do something to provide for the two to-

gether, don't you see? Killing two birds with one stone!"

"Very much like killing two birds, indeed! What are they to live on?"

"If Ancram makes up to Castalia, you must get him a place. Something modest, of course. I don't see that they can either of them expect a grand thing."

"Putting all other considerations aside," said my lord, drawing himself up, "it would be a very odd sort of match for Castalia Kilfinane."

"Come! his birth is as good as hers, any way. If his father was an apothecary, her mother was a poor curate's daughter."

"Rector's daughter, Belinda. Dr. Vyse was a learned man, and the rector of his parish."

"Oh, well, it all comes to the same thing. And as to an odd sort of match, why, perhaps, an odd match is better than none at all. You know Castalia's no beauty. She don't grow younger; and she'll be unbearable in her temper, if once she thinks she's booked for an old maid."

Poor Lord Seely was much disquieted. He had a kindly feeling for his orphan niece, which would have ripened into affection if Miss Castalia's character had been a little less repellent. And he really liked Algernon Errington so much that the notion of his marrying Castalia appeared to him in the light of a sacrifice, even although he held his own opinion as to the comparative goodness of the Ancram and Kilfinane blood. But, nevertheless, such was Lady Seely's force of character, that many days had not elapsed before his lordship was silenced, if not convinced, on the subject. And the invitation to go to Switzerland was given to Algernon, and accepted.

### STORM LAWS.

WHEN we find an eminent savant writing for the glorification, not of his own scientific exploits, but of the discoveries of others, his utterances have a double claim on our attention. And this recommendation is remarkably applicable to M. Faye's convincing Defence of the Law of Storms, which constitutes the Scientific Notice appended to the *Annuaire* of the Bureau des Longitudes for 1875.

From time to time our journals have to record the occurrence of hurricanes which devastate the East and West Indian and Chinese seas, under the name of tornados,

typhoons, and cyclones. European tempests give no idea of the violence of these fearful phenomena, which, in a few instants, wreck hundreds of vessels, drown thousands of victims, level buildings with the ground, destroy whole harvests, crush and sweep down forests, and cause gigantic bore-waves to rush far inland. In short, with the exception of an earthquake, there is nothing in the world so destructive as a typhoon—no calamity which sacrifices so many lives in so short a space of time. Consequently the disasters caused by these cyclones (whose final efforts reach our shores under the form of squalls and tempests) naturally directed public attention to phenomena hitherto but imperfectly understood. For, although they have been carefully studied in England and the United States, there are not a few persons, especially in France, who, on reading the title of this paper, will be astonished to learn that Storms are really subject to Laws, and will ask themselves what a writer can mean by maintaining that any such laws exist.

Nevertheless, storms are not disordinate phenomena; they are governed by sure and certain, almost geometrical rules; they obey laws of the highest interest to science, and still more useful as guides to the mariner. These rules are taught in naval schools, and are exacted from candidates for naval promotion. But recently the Laws of Storms have been contested; the navigators' guides to safety have been put in doubt on the pretended authority of Meteorology. Therefore has M. Faye taken upon himself to state clearly the Laws of Storms and to refute those who would lessen their practical value.

It is fortunate, both for navigation and for science, that eminent men, like Piddington, Reid, and Redfield, dismissing the theories and prejudices of the day and resolved to trust to facts alone, should have set to work some forty years ago, with no other pretension than to inquire whether these tempests did not follow some law, from which rules might be deduced for working a vessel. As they rage in the most frequented seas on the globe, there would be no lack of the means of information; data would only have to be collected and interpreted. The first premises on which those illustrious investigators went were, first, the idea that there ought to be some regularity in the course of hurricanes; and then the still clearer notion, supported by facts, that in every

one of these disastrous storms the wind appeared to turn in circles. "We do not ask," they said to themselves, "how storms are formed, but how they march." Instead of indulging in hypothetical speculations, they collected for every hurricane extracts from the log-books of every vessel caught in it; they traced upon a map the position of those vessels and the direction of the winds observed at given dates, and then applying to the map transparent papers on which concentric circles had been drawn, they discovered, from the arrow-heads marking the winds, that, at that particular date, over the whole region visited by the storm, the mass of air resting on sea and land must have been animated by a vast revolving movement round a determinate centre.

Every tornado, typhoon, and hurricane presents this very identical character, in the East Indies as well as in America, in the Chinese exactly as in the Southern seas; and they preserve it throughout their whole duration and course, which is often of more than six hundred leagues. The conclusion is evident. It is a case of circular motion on an enormous scale, distinctly limited to a certain portion of our atmosphere, which said revolving portion is also carried onwards by a movement of translation or progression.

A most remarkable fact is that, when we compare these partial results obtained throughout the northern hemisphere, from the Gulf of Bengal to the Caribbean Sea, passing by China and Japan, we find that the gyration takes place in the same direction, always and everywhere from right to left. Still more remarkable is it, that when our observations are extended to the southern hemisphere, the same law, the same gyration is met with, only in the reverse direction, namely, from left to right. Lastly, the lines of their onward course offer in each hemisphere such striking features in common, and such symmetry from hemisphere to hemisphere, that M. Faye has been able to delineate their movements in diagrams whose sameness of pattern immediately catches the eye. All is symmetry on either side of the equator, or rather of the zone of calms which oscillates a little every year, following the course of the Sun; there is symmetry in the direction of rotation, symmetry in the course and figure of the lines marking the progressive movement, and that all over the whole terrestrial globe.

Such are the Storm Laws. M. Faye retains their English name, because other nations had no hand in the discovery, which was reserved for the two greatest maritime powers to make—England and the United States. The result of persevering observation, of empiricism (taking the word in its good sense), they have not yet a theory. On the contrary, to discover them, it required great strength of mind to break with contemporary notions, and doctrines whose influence was sterile at the best. They form the counterpart of Kepler's Laws, which long remained without a theory to rest on, discovered by gropings in the dark and empiricism, thanks to the genius of a man who dared to free himself both from ancient prejudices, and from prevailing hypotheses and vain conceptions. And yet even the immortal Newton, when combining them with his principle of universal gravitation, adopted them with the quiet remark, "Uti supposuit Keplerus."

But the object here aimed at is practical utility; it is a question of saving human life. Are there any precursory signs of cyclones? For, the mariner forewarned in time, is all but rescued. When the cyclone begins to be felt, can we discover the position of its centre, in which the rotation increases in swiftness, where all the causes of destruction are at their worst? Since the cyclone does not stand still, but marches onwards, are there indications which reveal its direction? How can it be known whether a vessel is caught in the dangerous region—in which the velocity of the wind is the sum of the velocities of rotation and of translation—or in the manageable region, where the wind's velocity is only the difference of those two velocities? How handle the ship to avoid the hurricane, or to escape if unfortunately entrapped within its circuit? These questions have now their answers; some clear and imperative, others more elastic, leaving a certain degree of liberty to the tact and skill of the officer in command.

By a long and continuous fall, the barometer, which never deceives between the Tropics, announces that a cyclone is not far off. When the wind begins to blow with a certain force, it is easy to determine the direction in which the centre of the cyclone is situated. Piddington's rule is this: Face the wind and, if in the northern hemisphere, stretch out your right arm; the centre is in that direction.

If in the Southern Seas, it would be the left arm. Soon the strength of the wind increases, the barometer goes down more rapidly; the centre is approaching, for the cyclone stalks onwards. If the wind continues to augment without changing its direction, you are on the exact line of march of the centre, and you will soon be in the very heart of the tempest. Then, all of a sudden, there is a calm; in the centre of the cyclone is a circular space where reigns a relative calm which, by contrast, seems almost absolute. There, the sky is serene, and you fancy that you have escaped; but this quiet area is speedily crossed, and the storm recommences. It is then the hinder portion of the cyclone which is passing: only the wind has suddenly shifted one hundred and eighty degrees; it blows now in the opposite direction to its former quarter, perpendicularly to the path of the cyclone's centre.

The situation just supposed is a particular case, which does not very often occur; in general, the vessel happens to be to the right or the left of the centre of the cyclone's path, whose direction, however, should be endeavoured to be ascertained. The alternative is far from indifferent; it is a matter of life or death: for the one answers to the manageable, the other to the perilous semicircle. Here is Reid's rule, which removes all uncertainty: In whichever hemisphere you happen to be, if the wind successively changes its direction by passing through the points of the compass in the same direction as the cyclone itself, you are in the manageable semicircle; if it changes by shifting in a direction opposite to that of the cyclone's own rotation, you are in the dangerous semicircle. In the first of these two semicircles, it is possible to employ the force of the wind as a means of escape from the hurricane, and almost literally to accomplish the feat of taking a ride upon a cyclone.

But recent critics have reproached these rules with being merely empirical, unsupported by theory; the science of Mechanics ought to have taken them in hand and explained them. But Statics and Dynamics could do nothing of the kind; because the whirling movements of fluids, and even of liquids, still remain a sealed book to Statics and Dynamics. In spite of the adhesion of practical men, the Meteorologists do not find in the Storm Laws the points which, according to them, ought to

characterise tempests. They would even reject the practical rules which navigators have adopted for the last thirty years; and that because, as we have seen, they are entirely based on the circularity of the movement of the air in tempests.

The winds, objectors hold, ought to rush to a centre, and then suck up whatever they find there. Centripetal hurricanes of aspiration are an old idea, whose formation may be traced from the remotest times to the present, and originating in an illusion of the sense of sight. When a thing has been believed to have been seen, there is no possibility of gainsaying it. Thus, waterspout stories, the things they have lifted and the things they have let fall again, have been handed down through generations of sailors whose great-grandfathers had seen them, if they themselves had not—had seen them, much as the Arabs saw Lambert Bey, the founder of the Observatory at Cairo, unfasten the stars with his telescope and compel them to come within his reach.

Typhoons and cyclones, as well as waterspouts and whirlwinds, are all, in reality, kindred phenomena, differing only in their dimensions. A whirlwind is only a large waterspout; a typhoon, a magnified whirlwind; between the typhoon and the vastest cyclone there is not the slightest difference. If you arrange these phenomena in the order of their magnitude, you will pass from the smallest waterspout to the mightiest hurricane by an insensible transition. Mr. Piddington was therefore right in confounding them in the common term of cyclone. But in regard to their observation, there is this capital difference, that a waterspout or a tornado can be taken in at a glance, at least from a distance. We can catch its form, and observe how it treats the ground over which it passes or the clouds whence it descends; whereas cyclones are so enormous that they embrace areas far wider than the observer's horizon. Their limits are beyond his ken, and he can only form an idea of them by collecting observations made at distant points.

Neither may too much importance be attributed to electrical influences. There was a time when everything in Meteorology was attempted to be explained by electricity. On the occurrence of difficulties, it was a convenient resource, and the explanation seemed complete if a laboratory experiment could be cited to the purpose. But the electric spark,



special to charged conductors when brought within explosive distance, has always forgotten to spring from the two portions of a waterspout when about to join each other. In short, vertical aspiration and electricity being set aside as inadequate, the question so simplified remains an affair of pure Mechanics.

When there exist in a watercourse differences of velocity between two contiguous streams of fluid, there is tendency to form, in consequence of those unequal velocities, a regular movement of rotation round a vertical axis. Observation has also left no doubt about the downward direction of the spiral movement in those whirlpools. On a sufficiently large scale they are the terror of bathers. When a swimmer is unfortunately drawn into one, he is carried by a rapid rotation to the very bottom. The identity of aerial tornados and aqueous whirlpools, however complete mechanically and geometrically, is not absolutely so physically, in consequence of the differences between water and gases. The temperature of a stream is nearly the same throughout its depth; not so the atmosphere. Still the resemblance is sufficient for illustration.

One of the characteristics of the whirlpools in our watercourses, is to occur on every scale of magnitude, without the slightest change in their nature or properties. Some whirlpools are several inches, others several yards, several scores and hundreds of yards in diameter; their only limit is the breadth of the current in which they are produced. In our seas, there are gyrations of still wider area; some are even colossal—witness the vast revolving movements of the Atlantic—with a still expanse lying in their centre, in which enormous beds of *Fucus natans*, or *Sargassum vulgare*, form what are called Sargasso seas.\* On the Sun's surface we beheld revolving movements, namely, the spots, still more decidedly characterised, and of all sizes, up to spots five or six times as large as our globe. In like manner, in the circular movements of our atmosphere, you find little momentary passing whirlwinds, whiffs only a few feet or less across;

waterspouts much more durable, from ten to two hundred yards; and tornados from five hundred to three thousand yards in diameter. Beyond those dimensions the eye fails to catch the forms of the revolving column; it is then called by a different name, but there is no change in its real nature. Larger still, with diameters of three, four, and five degrees, they are known as hurricanes or cyclones; but there is still no alteration in their mechanism. They are invariably gyratory, circular movements, whose velocity goes on increasing towards the centre; initiated in the superior atmospheric currents at the expense of their unequal velocities; propagated downwards into the lower strata, in spite of their perfectly calm condition or independently of the winds therein prevailing; committing their ravages when they reach and encounter the obstacles standing on the soil; and following in their march the upper currents, so that their devastations trace on the terrestrial globe the otherwise invisible course of those currents.

The Storm Laws, then, are in reality only an approximation. They would be always reliable and exact, if the currents of the atmosphere were never subject to any disturbing action. But as they take no account of those disturbances and afford no means of foreseeing or appreciating their effect, we ought not always to apply those Laws with our eyes shut. Nevertheless, the Storm Laws have a general agreement with the mechanical theory of revolving motion in the atmosphere. The nautical rules deduced from them deserve, in ordinary cases, all the confidence which mariners have placed in them for the last thirty years. The exceptions ought to be simply treated as mechanical disturbances of the gyratory movement, whose investigation will surely complete the first happy indications. The discovery of these approximate Laws of Tempests is one of the grandest scientific conquests of the age; and if we would carry the actual approximation still farther, it is the study of the solar cyclones which will furnish us with future guides.

Whirlpools, in former times, played an important part in our general conceptions of the Universe. Fallen into discredit by a natural reaction against a false idea, they have been too completely forgotten. Consequently, when a gyratory character was recognised in the grand movements of the atmosphere, men determined by common

\* So styled by Maury in his *Physical Geography of the Sea*. "Midway the Atlantic, in the triangular space between the Azores, Canaries, and the Cape de Verd Islands, is the great Sargasso Sea. Covering an area equal in extent to the Mississippi Valley, it is so thickly matted over with Gulf weed that the speed of vessels passing through it is often much retarded," &c.

consent to attribute them to quite different and discrepant causes. Occasionally, geometricians seemed inclined to refer them to tumultuous and chaotic motions, of which they could make nothing and out of which, they thought, nothing was to be made. At present it is clearly seen that movements of the cyclonic order really do constitute a vast series of regular and stable phenomena whose very perturbations affect a geometrical behaviour.

This series, which commences with the tiny whirlpools of our streams, comprises the most curious and the most fearful phenomena of our atmosphere, the gigantic movements which observation has revealed in the Sun, and extends perhaps to the nebulae, in which Lord Rosse's telescope has detected a decidedly spiral structure. It would therefore be of the highest utility, M. Faye concludes, to refer the theory of these atmospheric movements to the domain of rational mechanics. For that, the first step was, to search out their rules empirically; which step was accomplished, thirty years ago, by the eminent authors of the *Law of Storms*.

#### OLD LONDON CARRIERS AND THEIR HOUSES OF CALL.

A SINGULAR book is extant, written by a singular man, on a subject which throws much light on the state of society in the Stuart times, in so far as concerns the transmission of goods, letters, and passengers from place to place. John Taylor, in the reigns of James the First and Charles the First, in the time of the Commonwealth, and far on into the reign of the Second Charles, was knocking about the world in various capacities, and with many ups and downs of fortune—more downs, perhaps, than ups. At one time in his career he was a waterman on the Thames. Wherever he went, or whatever he was doing, scribbling was his chief delight; he wrote and published largely, nearly as much in verse as in prose. He clubbed together his occupation and his amusement by calling himself the Water Poet, a name by which he has ever since been known. We have already made his acquaintance in this capacity.\* One of his numerous undertakings was of a remarkably useful character, albeit not very profitable to himself, so far as can

be judged from the context. The best way of conveying an idea of this undertaking, embodied in a small book now before us, is to transcribe the title of the booklet in full; and this we do the more willingly, because it is a good example of the amazingly prolix title-pages which the old writers were wont to prefix to their books:—"The Carriers' Cosmographie: A Briefe Relation of the Innes, Ordinaries, Hostelries, and other Lodgings in and neere London, where the Carriers, Waggoners, Footpostes, and Higglers doe usually come, from any parts, Townes, Shires, and Counties of the Kingdom of England, Principality of Wales, also from Kingdoms of Scotland and Ireland. With nominations of what Dayes of the weeke they doe come to London, and on what Dayes they returne; whereby all sorts of people may finde direction how to receive or send Goods or Letters, unto such places as their owners may require. As also where the Ships, Hoighs, Barks, Tilt-boats, and Wherries doe usually attend to carry Passengers and Goods to the Coast Townes of England, Scotland, Ireland, and the Netherlands; and where the Barges and Boats are ordinarily to bee had that goe up the River of Thames, westward from London."

Let us see what this denotes, in the condition of English travelling which prevailed in the year Sixteen Hundred and Thirty-Seven, when Charles the First had been about ten years on the throne.

In the first place, as regards goods and merchandise. This branch of the carrier's trade was but slightly developed. Instead of making nearly all our cutlery at Sheffield, as now, there were cutlers in most large towns, who supplied their neighbours without any great extent of road transport. Instead of looking, as now, to Birmingham for trinkets, and to the Black Country for iron pots and kettles, most of our principal towns had a sufficient number of gold-workers, blacksmiths, tinsmiths, brass-founders, &c., to supply the metal wares required in the neighbourhood. The cotton manufacture had hardly commenced; while the spinning and weaving of linens, woollens, and silks were more generally diffused throughout the country than they are at present. The coal consumed in London was entirely brought by sea; and most of the mineral ores were worked and smelted, in localities where water-carriage was similarly available. Fish could with difficulty reach the inland districts at all,

\* ALL THE YEAR ROUND, Feb. 20th, 1875, "The Voyage of a Water Poet."

and was on that account sold very cheaply on the coast. In these and in other ways local distribution was more observable than great concentration; the inhabitants of each town looked to the manufacturers and workmen of that town, rather than to those of any great centre or centres of industry, for the supply of their wants. This was to a certain extent a matter of necessity; for the roads were so narrow and so bad as to render the transport of goods a difficult, tedious, and costly affair. Horses could trot or walk where wheeled vehicles could not run; and thus a good deal of road traffic was conducted by bagmen—travellers who carried packages of merchandise in their saddle-bags. Larger consignments were intrusted to carts and waggons, the latter having very broad wheels and many horses; and the troubles which ensued when these wheels stuck in the mud formed many an amusing incident in the diaries, dramas, and stories of those times. The carts and waggons which went to and from London were naturally looked up to as more important than those confined to provincial districts. The inns and hostleries at which the vehicles, horses, and drivers put up at night were also the goods' offices; and John Taylor did a very useful work in presenting such a list of them as he could obtain.

In the second place, as concerns travellers. If two towns were situated on the same river, wherries, barges, and fly-boats of various kinds were much employed for the conveyance of passengers; and townsmen who had easy access to the sea naturally took advantage of that mode of travelling. Canals there were none; regular stage coaches were in their infancy; and passengers who could not afford the hire of a coach for themselves mostly travelled in the waggons and carts, which also conveyed merchandise. John Taylor had not to get up one list of waggons and another of coaches: the same vehicle generally served to carry goods and passengers, and people had to acquaint themselves with the hostleries from whence the lumbering conveyances started.

In the third place, we have to bear in mind that there was no Postal System in those days. The Government had not organised a plan for this purpose. Letters were conveyed by hand, or were placed under the care of carriers and waggons; and it was always a doubtful problem whether, and when, a letter would reach

its destination. Some of the vehicles, perhaps quicker and lighter than the rest, carried bags to the more important towns; and the name of "Post" was often given to such a vehicle, or perhaps to the bag which it carried, or to the man who carried the bag, but with no such official importance as we now attach to the term. People had to take their letters, not to a Post Office in our sense of the word, but to the inns, and consign them just as they would merchandise and passengers. John Taylor, therefore, in collecting the materials for his list of inns, rendered three kinds of service at once, having relation to goods, travellers, and letters. His list was a sort of Bradshaw's Guide and Post Office Directory rolled into one, so far as the arrangement of that age permitted such luxuries.

The Introduction to Taylor's book is not the least curious feature about it. He had considerable power of sarcasm, and made use of it to give some hard hits to persons who had behaved shabbily to him. His Introduction was addressed, "To all whom it may concern, with my kinde remembrance to the Posts, Carriers, Waggoners, and Higglers." He claims a right to say that, "If any man or woman whomsoever hath occasion or patience to read this following description, it is no doubt but they shall find full satisfaction for as much as they laide out for the Booke; if not, it is against my Will, and my good intentions are lost and frustrate." Then comes a statement of these intentions. "I wrote it for three causes. First, for a generall and necessary good use for the whole commonwealth. Secondly, to express my gratefull duties to all those who have honestly paid me my Money which they owed me for my Booke of the Collection of Tavernes in London and Westminster, and tenne Shires or Counties round about London; and doe also thanke all such as doe purpose to pay me hereafter. Thirdly (for third sort) that can pay me and will not, I write this as a document. I am well pleas'd to leave them to the hangman's tuition, as being past any other man's mending; for I must have them to know that I am sensible of the too much losse that I doe suffer by their pride or cousenage; their number being so many, and my charge so great which I paid for Paper and Printing of those Bookes, that the base Dealing of these Sharks is insupportable." That he had experienced much trouble and annoy-



ance in collecting the materials for the present work, is made clear in his own pungent style. "The tedious Toyle that I had in the collection, and the harsh and unsavoury answers that I was faine to take patiently from Hostlers, Carmen, and Porters, may move any man that thinks Himself mortal to pitty me. In some places I was suspected for a projector, or one that had devised some Tricks to bring the Carriers under some new Taxation; and sometimes I was held to have been a man-taker, or serjeant, or baylife, to arrest or attach men's beasts or goods. Indeed, I was scarce taken for an honest man amongst the most of them. All which suppositions I was enforced oftentimes to wash away with two or three Lugges of Beere, at most of the Innes I came to. In some Innes or Hosteries I could get no certain Intelligence, so that I did make Investigation at the next Inne unto it, which I did oftentimes take upon Trust, that I doubted it was indirect and imperfect."

The indefatigable Directory compiler (for such he assuredly was) proceeds to set forth the unavoidable consequences of the difficulties thrown in his way. "Had the Carriers, Hostlers, and others knowne my harmlesse and honest intendments, I doe thinke this following relation had been more large and usefull; but if there be anything left out in this first, it shall be with diligence inserted hereafter, when the Carriers and I shall be more familiarly acquainted, and they, with the Hostlers, shall be pleased in their ingenerosity to afford me more ample directions. In the meane space, I hope I shall give none of my Readers cause to curse the Carrier that brought me to towne." The chance of removal from place to place, and the difficulty thus arising of finding out the new address, did not escape his notice. "Some may objecte that the Carriers doe often change and shift from one Inne or Lodging to another, whereby the following directions may be hereafter untrue. To this I answer that I am not bound to binde them, or to stay them in any one place; but if they doe remove, they may be enquired for at the place which they have left or forsaken, and it is an easie matter to finde them by the learned intelligence of some other Carrier, an Hostler, or an understanding Poste."

Quite characteristic of the man is the independent way in which he takes leave of the reader, after doing his best to render

the book reliable and useful. "And thus, Reader, if thou beest pleas'd, I am satisfied; if thou beest contented, I am paid; if thou beest angry, I care not for it."

The book itself, the Carriers' Cosmographie, is of very humble proportions. Taylor's difficulty in obtaining information made his entire budget little more in dimensions than a pamphlet. Yet must he have devoted a good deal of time and trouble in collecting it.

The towns are arranged alphabetically, with a brief mention, under the heading of each, of the inn, and other particulars of departure from and arrival in London. Here is a specimen, relating to St. Albans: "The Carriers of Saint Albanes doe come every Friday to the signe of the Peacocke in Aldersgate Street; on which daies also commeth a coach from Saint Albanes to the Bell in the same street. The like coach is also thence for the carriage of passengers every Saturday." St. Albans, we thus see, was rather exceptionally favoured, in having a coach once a week as well as a cart or waggon. Of Aylesbury we are told: "The Carriers of Aylesbury in Buckinghamshire doe lodge at the George neare Holborne Bridge, and at the Swan in the Strand, and at the Angel behind St. Clement's Church, and at the Bell in Holborn; they are at one of these places every other day." This is somewhat vague; it probably means that the same cart or waggon stopped at all the four inns in succession, to take up passengers, goods, and letters. One more example will suffice, for all the entries are moulded much in the same form. "The Carriers of Braintree and Bocking, in Essex, doe lodge at the signe of the Tabbard in Gracious Street (neere the Conduit); they do come on Thursdaies and goe away on Fridaies."

Not the least interesting part of the book is that which relates to the traffic on the Thames, the "Silent Highway" which Taylor so much loved. Within the limits of London, Westminster, and Southwark, the wherry traffic was very considerable. There was only one bridge over the Thames, and the river banks were studded here and there with noblemen's mansions and pleasant gardens. Taylor's landing-stairs as a waterman was a place of thriving trade—Bankside, on the Surrey side of the water. There were theatres near at hand, and the gentry and cits of London and Westminster were wont to take a pleasant trip across the river to those



places of amusement. In one of his poems he apostrophises his favourite river:—

Noble Thames, whilst I can hold a pen,  
I will divulge thy glory unto men;  
Thou in the morning, when my coin is scant,  
Before the evening doth supply my want.

And he liked the occupation of a waterman for its own sake, irrespective of the bread which it put into his mouth:—

I have a trade, much like an alchemist,  
That oft-times by extraction, if I list,  
With sweating labour at a wooden oar,  
I'll get the coin'd-refined silver ore;  
Which I count better than the sharpening tricks  
Of cozening tradesmen or rich politicks,  
Or any proud fool, ne'er so proud or wise,  
That does my needful honest trade despise.

Up-river "great boats," for the conveyance of goods and passengers, started from Queenhithe on Tuesdays and Thursdays, bound for Chelsea and other riverside towns and villages as far as Windsor and Maidenhead, returning to Queenhithe on Mondays and Thursdays; and once a week as far as Reading. The penny and twopenny steamers, stopping at a dozen places between London Bridge and Chelsea, how utterly would they have been disbelieved, even as remotely-future possibilities, in the time of John Taylor! A little bit more must be mentioned in regard to up-river accommodation. "To Bull Wharfe (neere Queenhithe) there doth come and goe Great Boates, twice or thrice a weeke, which boates doe carry Goodes betwixt London and Kingston-upon-Thames; also thither doth often come a boat from Colnbrooke, which serveth those parts for such purposes."

Down river the arrangements were different, in order to encounter the stronger tide and rougher water often met with. "At Billingsgate are every Tyde to be had Tilt-boats and wherries, Light-horsemen (a name at that time for one kind of river craft), and Barges from London to the townes of Gravesend and Mitton in Kent, or to any other place within the sayd bounds (as weather and occasion may shew)." Shorter distances were reached more easily. "At Lyon Key, twice almost in every twenty-four hours, or continually, are Tylt-boats or wherries, that passe to and fro betwixt London and the townes of Deptford, Greenwich, Woolwich, Erith, and Greenhithe in Kent; and also boats are to be had that every Tyde doe carry Goods and Passengers between London and Rainham, Purfleet, and Grays in Essex." More daring was a voyage to places beyond Graves-

end. "A Hoigh (hoy) doth come from Colchester in Essex to Smart's Key, neere Billingsgate, by which goods may be carried from London to Colchester weekly." There were also sailing vessels, greatly varying in size and in designation, which turned north when reaching the mouth of the Thames, and plied to Ipswich, Yarmouth, Lynn, Hull, Shields, and Berwick; and others which, turning south, worked their slow way to Rochester, Maidstone, Margate, Sandwich, Dover, Weymouth, Poole, Dartmouth, and Plymouth.

Full of good sense and useful information, as well as of whimsies, was the Water Poet.

#### A VERY LOW RESTAURANT IN PARIS.\*

HAVING described a restaurant, where things are done in the grand style, and a restaurant where people are done in style yet grander, it remains to tell of the restaurant where no one takes the pains to do either things or people, leaving them to do themselves. Some time since I visited the Californie, with a view to this paper, thinking that Paris itself could show no eating-house more cheap and nasty. I am half-ashamed now to confess such innocence. Why, you are asked no less than fifty centimes—fourpence threefarthings of hard cash—for dinner at the Californie; and can anyone suppose that a man who gets through thirty glasses of absinthe by two o'clock in the afternoon—the case is real, he died last night—has fourpence three farthings to spend in food? I am glad I did not hastily plunge into an account of that excellent and luxurious establishment. By waiting, I have learnt more interesting things. And yet there is a something about the Californie. Its owner died the other day, and he left a fortune—not two or three hundred pounds, but a great many thousands—out of dinners at fourpence three farthings, mark you! There must be awful mysteries in that kitchen. I will investigate them, if I can; but it is dangerous to pry too closely in that quarter. They gave the Père Californie a great funeral; all the scoundrels of Paris were there, and all the newspapers afforded him a column. For that very reason I will say no more about his establishment.

\* ALL THE YEAR ROUND, New Series, Vol. 13, p. 323, and Vol. 14, p. 113.

Those who have studied French romances will recall many a fanciful description of the beggars' restaurant. Some of them have been sketched upon the spot, notably those of Eugène Sue; but times and manners change. I should be loath to say that no places exactly like the *Lapin Blanc* are still existing, but I cannot hear of any. The real *Lapin* itself was destroyed years ago. Nowhere, now, can you find even an *Azart de la Fourchaite*, as it was fantastically spelt. The celebrated *Azart* was, as the name implies, the *Chance of the Fork*—its customers dipped for their dinner in a huge pot, paying one halfpenny, deposited beforehand, for each plunge. Many blanks there were, and very few prizes. But the *Azart de la Fourchaite* seems to have gone after the *Lapin Blanc*.

At present the lowest restaurant of Paris is called a *Bibine*, and it may be found flourishing on the left bank principally; that is—for one would not like to commit oneself in this matter—the lowest restaurant I have yet discovered was on that side of the *Seine*. Take the *bibine* of *Madame Frochard*, in an alley, unnamed, by the *Place Maubert*. It seems probable that *Frochard* is not the lady's name; for, in that neighbourhood, few things or people go by such a title as was given them in their baptism. But thus is she recognised, and by no other name would her comestibles smell as sweet. The alley is narrow as *Maidenlane*, bordered with ancient houses that never stood straight. In the most crippled of the row, under a portal that seems dropping on your head, *Madame Frochard* retails her hospitality. Some houses as old keep the remains of a former grandeur. Looking at worn pillars and coats of arms, half effaced, you think sadly how princesses once held state within their halls. No such feeling stirs one in entering the *bibine* of *Madame Frochard*. If her house was not built for its present purpose, it was built apparently for something of the sort. Poor, and squalid, and filthy, it must always have been; an evil spot in a dirty neighbourhood. There is no door to the *bibine*. Perhaps at night they block the opening, and in cold weather some means must be found to keep out the frost; but these are mysteries. One enters at once a low and smoke-dried hall. Two bleak windows, filled with bottle-glass, light it in a manner; walls and ceiling are black with mildew, grease,

and smoke; the pavement under foot, helped out with bricks, is humid. In this abode, which looks like a cellar, there is of course no furniture, save heavy wooden benches and tables to match, so incredibly filthy as to baffle description. On one side, jealously to watch the door, is *Mother Frochard's comptoir*, of deal, once painted white, adorned round the top with cupids, half rubbed out, holding garlands of roses more black than a dead cauliflower. On the wall opposite hangs a black board, inscribed with the day's bill of fare, in chalk. It never varies. When effaced by rubbing shoulders, *Madlle. Eudoxie Frochard*—who can write—renews the inscription, which is to this effect:—

## CARTE DU JOUR.

Potage.

Haricots à l'huile (beans in oil).

Moules (muscles).

Pommes de terre.

Arlequin (mystery).

Consommé de cheval (horse soup).

Salade.

Fromage de Brie avarié (mity cheese).

Canette de bière.

Petit noir (a fancy preparation of coffee).

One shilling and twopence each.

To be paid on delivery.

The soup is served in plates, cracked, chipped, with all their glaze worn off—they call such calottes. The *petit noir* in a cup to match. For solid meats, no plate is given, but a fragment of newspaper. It must be a newspaper of radical flavour though. *Madame Frochard's* best cooking would not go down, served upon the *Figaro*, the *Pays*, or the *Univers*. We haven't much money at the *bibine*, but we have desperately strong opinions. There are gentlemen here so nice in their tastes, that they could smell *M. Louis Veuillot* through a purée of garlic, and the flavour of *M. de Villemessant* would turn their banquetting to nausea. You might still collect all the series of suppressed Communist newspapers in these *bibines*. I am told, that the dangerous children of Paris who frequent them give the preference to those which serve upon old numbers of the *Combat* and the *Cri du Peuple*. Beer is retailed in mugs of the rudest brown ware, adorned with a cærulean star.

Behind the counter I have told you of, sits *Madame Frochard*. What a type! Her face is red and swollen, eyes menacing as those of a wild boar. Her big red mouth has round rough edges, overhung

by a grisly moustache! She wears a false front shamelessly, cocking and shoving it about like a cap. Such a voice, so deep and so resonant, would be dangerous for the glass of the establishment, if any there were. Every clause of her emphatic speech is pointed by a bang of that great fist upon the counter. She wears an acre or two of old brown silk, so old and so brown that man's recollection runneth not to the contrary. Advisedly I said an acre or two. Not by yards could you measure the stuff needed to clothe that phenomenon of flesh. Time was, maybe, when Mère Frochard had waist as fine, not to say as scraggy, as Madlle. Eudoxie's beside her. Another type is she, and let who will declare which of them is the more repulsive. Madlle. Eudoxie reminds me of a box of tools. Her eyes are gimlets, her nose a hammer, her mouth a gouge, and her body a bag of nails. Her thin lips always wear a mocking, in-drawn smile. She grabs the coppers with a sniff. For my own part, of the two, I prefer the monstrous ugliness of the mother.

The clientèle of a place like this consists of working men, who can't or won't work; of the lowest class of thieves; of chiffonniers, or rag-pickers; of habitual criminals, belonging to that class which can only rob with violence. If a beggar comes here, I am told that he must surely be an honest man; for the unscrupulous of his fraternity board in regular houses, and pay ten to fifteen francs a day. The prefect of police told us, a few weeks since, that twelve to fifteen francs is the average return of begging in the fashionable quarters; and he cited a mendicant who pays twenty-five francs, or one pound, per day for his board and lodging at Passy, wine not included—for this good man owns his cellar, and keeps it well stocked!

Hideous, indeed, are the faces to be observed in a bibine, and almost more hideous the rags and dirt. The blouse is not at all favoured, apparently, by these folk. And I have remarked that a ragged coat or jacket in Paris looks very much more wretched and disreputable than in London. The reason is not far to seek. Parisian clothes, unless of the best London cut, are always pretentious. The tailor knows his customers, and is aware that their first and last desire will be to "show off." He also shares the national absurdity, and would fain show off also. Hence a cut which seems to us bad taste even when the cloth is new, but which appears really

loathsome when the stuff wears ragged and threadbare; hence braiding that trails, and fancy buttons, and silk facings that now exist only as a fringe around the lining. In the same room, a French "blackguard" looks more blackguardly than his English rival. Restless vanity possesses him, however low he may be fallen. There were some, I should say, of the direst ruffians unhung at Mother Frochard's, but one felt inclined to laugh whilst loathing them. I have seen murderers of divers race and colour; they were terrible, for the most part. But your French murderer is grotesque. He plays jackal amongst the wild beasts. His arm is as strong as, and his heart perhaps more wicked than, any others; but you fancy him killing in an attitude taken from Robert Macaire, and mounting a frown modelled on that of his favourite actor. I remember a boy there, such a boy! A few days after we had a horrible assassination; one young villain tempted another, younger, to rob his parents, and then threw him in the river with a stone round his neck. The assassin, when caught, played such antics in the dock, with voice and gesture, as drew from the judge very severe remarks about the *barrière* theatre where his education seemed to have been perfected. In reading the account of that trial, I wondered whether this youth at Madame Frochard's was the hero of the ghastly tale.

He sat at one of the rude and filthy tables, on which both elbows rested—attitude from the "*Chevaliers du Brouillard*"—on his head a peaked cap, torn and grimy. His face, smeared with dirt, had that putty whiteness which distinguishes the low criminal in every land. Eyes small and shadowless, as if bored with a gimlet, glanced all around at once. The mouth was full of railing and bitterness. Such a mouth had nearly all there, and it is one peculiarly French. Conceit of self, contempt for all his fellows, and hatred for all above, are the meaning of that ugly grin. The lad's clothing might have been worth some curious fraction of a centime at a tallow factory. There they could possibly have extracted useful grease out of it; I can't think it would have served any other purpose. And yet, the colourless rag around his neck had once been satin, I think. Nay, in a certain light, it seemed to me there were remains of a gold stamp on it. And the long locks down each cheek had been curled that morning—



positively frizzed, or twisted up in paper over night. Beside him, on each side, sat a younger lad, convulsed with laughter at his hoarse remarks. He, however, allowed himself no more than a twist of the pale lips, imitated, I doubt not, from some actor of the *barrière*. I fancy that my appearance gave some food for this young ruffian's wit; but to catch what he said would have been a hopeless effort, even for a Frenchman of respectable bringing up. Our home slang is language undefiled in comparison with the argot of a Paris thief.

Few women frequent these bibines, excepting those who come in with their male relatives. Where feed the dreadful creatures who hang on the most draggled skirts of Lutetia, I have yet to learn. Those present struck me as comparatively respectable. The men with them did not look so much like thieves as the rest. But they were very, very wretched; clad in stuffs colourless and shapeless, hanging in that style which tells there is no raiment underneath.

Nothing struck me as so strange about the bibine as the quiet reigning there. Men talk to their friends in a low, hoarse tone, with much laughter, truly; but suppressed, suspicious, timid, as it were. They look all round before they laugh; but, for that matter, they are always glancing here and there, like monkeys in a cage. Towards evening, I believe, there is noise enough. These foul birds wake at the approach of night, and Mother Frochard cannot sit behind her counter, like an evil old goddess, watching the misery she feeds. If the *gendarmes* are not to enter, she must use those big fists of hers to keep things quiet; and they say she is but too ready, after soaking *cassis* all the forenoon and *noyau* all the evening. Mother Frochard's way of keeping peace is more violent than the fighting of most folks; but it is everybody's interest to avoid scandal, and such people as frequent this place have learnt to be cautious even in their cups, and to be vigilant even when asleep.

I don't think that the like of these bibines is to be found in London. Well would it be for Paris if she could get rid of these scandalous houses, where children are ruined before they reach an age to know good and evil.

Finally, I must add a word about the alleged danger of exploring these haunts. That a certain risk must be run is evident, and there may be places where the risk

is very serious, indeed, at night; but such are decidedly the exceptions. Nine people in ten of those frequenting the bibines dread nothing so much as to attract the notice of the police. They will scowl at you, and say unintelligible things, which are probably insulting; but, if any drunken scoundrel shows the inclination to proceed, as lawyers say here, "*aux voies de fait*," Mother Frochard bangs the counter with her awful fist, and hurls such basso curses at the disturber as would alarm a Red Indian on the war-trail; and all her huge body sways, as if gathering itself to move. Panic seizes the bibine, and, with a bound simultaneous, all present fall upon the roisterer. But, at the same time, I recommend those interested to choose broad daylight for their visit, and to dress in their very shabbiest clothes: a shovelful of dust thrown over, and a careful rub against a white-washed wall, are also advised.

## THE HOSTESS OF THE RAVEN.

### IN TWO CHAPTERS. CHAPTER II.

At length the watchman came within earshot. I could see his figure, black against the white road, which the moonlight partially illuminated for a minute or so. I called and shouted to him, and he stopped and threw the light of his lantern upward on my face and head. As soon as he saw me, he started back in evident amazement, and, turning all the light he could upon my face, stood staring at me with one hand shading his eyes.

"Are you alone?" I asked. "Can you get assistance? You must get into the house, even by force, if it is necessary; I'm afraid that something dreadful has happened. I am a prisoner. I have been locked into my room."

As I spoke, my voice seemed blown back into my throat by the hot wind, and a cloud of dust was whirled up from the road through the open window.

"How came you in the Raven?" returned the watchman, in a tone of the utmost surprise and bewilderment, and still staring at me as if he could not believe his senses.

"For Heaven's sake, man, make haste. What matters how I came here? I am a traveller. I tell you something dreadful has taken place in this house to-night."

"Something dreadful? What?"

I was driven beyond all patience by the slow, cool manner of the fellow, on whom my words seemed to produce less impres-



sion than the fact of my presence in the Raven. The light of his lantern showed me, a leaden water-pipe, which ran down the front of the house, close to my window, and which was encircled at intervals by rings of carved wood, that afforded an easy foothold. In less time than it takes to tell it, I had clambered down, and stood on the ground beside the watchman. I seemed to breathe more freely now that I was out of that house.

"You ask what has happened," said I, seizing the man's arm. "I am afraid that murder has happened!" And then in a few words I told him what I had heard.

"Then you saw nothing?" said he, drawing nearer to me, and speaking with more eagerness than he had yet shown.

"I tell you I was locked into my own room; but I heard a din, as if all the devils were loose: cries, shrieks, groans; and then a noise of struggling."

"Do you know what the folks say hereabouts?" asked the watchman, in a low voice. And, as he spoke, he glanced over his shoulder, as if fearful of being overheard. "They say that the Raven is haunted. More than one, going by the house late at night, or in a dark winter's morning, when you couldn't see your hand before you, has heard strange voices and cries in there. Once or twice the folks have said a word to the old woman; but she's ill to talk to, is the Raben-wirthin" (literally, the Raven-hostess), "and there's no getting a syllable from her, if she don't choose to speak. A gruesome woman! She's as strong as any two men; and, as to frightening her, I believe she's afraid of nothing in this world or the other!"

Here the watchman crossed himself in a manner which showed that he, at all events, did not share the old woman's stoutness of nerve.

"If the house is haunted by evil spirits—and I'm afraid it is—they are evil spirits clothed in mortal bodies," said I, remembering the two fierce, sullen faces I had seen in the kitchen. "Come, for Heaven's sake! let us lose no more time. Perhaps we may get into the house by the door beneath the porch."

I hastened towards the angle of the house where the porch was, and the watchman, somewhat reluctantly, followed me. No sooner had we turned the corner and got out of the shelter of the broadside of the house, than a tremendous gust of wind nearly took me off my feet. Here the Föhn was raging in its full force, and

mingled with its roaring came the ever-increasing rush of the side torrent.

"Halt!" cried the watchman, suddenly seizing my sleeve, to hold me back. "Don't you see how the Schwarzbach is rising? Jesu Maria! This will be a flood such as we have not seen for twenty years."

He held his lantern forward, and I saw that my foot was on the edge of a foaming stream where, that evening, the little tangled garden had been. The wooden paling was gone, and the rushing water kept carrying past fragments of wood and debris of various kinds; and, as we looked, the dead body of a drowned animal was whirled along, and disappeared in the darkness.

"That's a goat; one of Andreas Müller's, at the Zurfluh Pasture, I'm thinking. Blessed Virgin! if it lasts like this for another hour, the Raven will scarcely stand against the waters; 'tis an old house, and has had no nail or beam renewed in it for many a year!"

With that the watchman raised his horn, and blew a series of discordant, wailing notes in quick succession.

We waited. Not a sound in the house; not a light in the windows. Only a gleam of transient moonlight on the ashen grey shutters; only the howling of the wind and the rushing of the waters.

"We must knock at the door; we must batter it in, if need be," said I, taking up a great stone for the purpose. The watchman stayed my hand. If his horn had not roused the inmates, no knocking would rouse them, he said; and, as for battering down the solid oak door, no force less than that of the Schwarzbach would do it, he opined.

"But, if we wait for the flood to batter down the door, every creature in the house will be drowned!" cried I. "Is it not an extraordinary thing that no notice is taken of the warning sound of your horn? They must know, well enough, what it means."

"Aye, the Raben-wirthin knows, well enough, what that means."

"She, poor creature, is past hearing any earthly sounds, I much fear; but the others—that ferocious-looking young man—the girl—the unfortunate idiot—what keeps them all still and silent?"

"The others? Oh, the others won't understand anything about it; and if the fit is on them to be silent, silent they'll be, though the waters were up to their necks."

"What do you mean? They would not sit still and let themselves be drowned! Is

it possible that they may have already escaped by the back of the house?"

"Escaped! Not they! They wouldn't think of escaping. But you can soon satisfy yourself about that. Come round to the back of the house with me. Not that way! The Schwarzbach is over your ankles there by this time. Come back under your window, and then over the wall; it's no height."

I followed him cautiously, holding on by any projection of the house that offered itself as we turned the corner, for the wind was now really terrific. We clambered over a low wall and found ourselves in a sort of courtyard, the same in which I had seen the girl carrying wood. Here all was quiet, and the windows on this side of the house were barred outside by massive rods of iron. We tried the door giving access to the yard, and found it firmly fastened on the inside. It was clear, then, that no one could have quitted the Raven that way.

"I told you how it was," said my companion as we returned to the road. "They would never think of escaping."

"It may be that if those servants have committed some hideous crime, they dread justice more than the flood. And perhaps they hope we may go to Falkenau to get assistance, and meanwhile——"

The man interrupted me. "Servants," said he, shaking his head mysteriously. "There have been no servants in the Raven for fifteen years or more; not since the old man died, and before that. But as to getting assistance, my horn has been heard in Falkenau before this. I never blow like that, so many notes close together, unless the waters are getting dangerous, and help is needed. There'll be some folks here before long. Most of the people have been up all night, and many of them didn't go to bed last night neither, for the Föhn has been blowing more or less strong for the last week. And there's come down an awful lot of melted snow from the great glacier yonder. All the streams are full. You'd best put yourself under the lee of the house, and wait. By ourselves we can do nothing. If those inside the Raven are to be saved—supposing the Schwarzbach to keep rising at this rate—it'll take more than you or me, or twice as many, to save 'em."

He pulled me after him to the front of the house, and seated himself on a bench there, motioning me to sit down beside him. In answer to my urgent repre-

sentations that no time ought to be lost, he reiterated his assurance that assistance was coming, and that we must, perforce, wait for it.

"Look!" said he, pointing up the road. "Can't you see a little spark like, moving about in Falkenau? That's a lantern. The folks are coming."

Finding it useless to attempt any further action alone, I crouched down beside the watchman, and determined to await the issue; but before doing so I begged him to sound his horn once more, and as loudly as he could. He did so. But no result followed. The house remained dark, silent, and closed.

"In Heaven's name," said I, "who and what are these people? You say there are no servants in the Raven. Who, then, are that young man and woman, and the idiot boy?"

The moon was now shining uncloudedly. By her light I saw the watchman look at me with a singular expression, as he answered, "They are the children of the Raben-wirthin."

"Her children!"

"Her own children. Two sons and a daughter. There was another daughter, the eldest of 'em. But she went away years ago. Some say she's dead. Some say they sent her to Windisch, in Aargau. I don't know."

"Her own children!"

The sounds I had heard recurred to me with redoubled horror. That shriek of "Mother!" received a blood-chilling significance. What fearful crime had been committed, or attempted by the wretched beings I had seen? And then again, the question presented itself, if they were the hostess's own children, why were they so squalid, starved, and filthy? The house was dirty and neglected, truly; but, as I have said, there were symptoms in it of comparative wealth. The watchman shook his head. "What would be the use," said he, "of trying to keep such as them decent, and like other folks? Didn't you notice? Couldn't you see?"

"See! What?"

"They're—not right." And he put his finger to his forehead.

"Mad?"

"Yes; mad. They're worse at some times than others, but never in their right minds like other Christians."

"But the hostess——"

"Oh, she's not mad. No; the Raben-wirthin has a strong head and a strong

will. It's queer that her children should be such as they are. It seems a sort of curse on the family. But they say it was in the blood of old Zachary Dietrich, her husband."

"But—good Heavens, man! you don't mean to say that the woman lives there shut up alone with two lunatics? I never heard of anything so frightful! It cannot be!"

"What would you have? They are her own children after all."

"Her own children! Yes; but they should be properly cared for—taken to some asylum——"

"Jesu Maria, who would venture to say that to Frau Dietrich? No one durst hint a word to her about such a thing. She won't allow that Theresa and Rudolph are out of their minds. And you know they're not dangerous. And they do a vast deal of work. She makes them work hard, does the Raben-wirthin. I've seen that girl Theresa carrying a load of wood that a man would stagger under, for all she looks to be but skin and bone. And they dig, and mow, and work in the fields all summer."

"Cannot the old woman afford to have any help—any servants?"

"She could afford it well enough. They're well off, though you might not think so. The Dietrichs and the Barts—the old woman was Anna Bart—were the richest families hereabouts. When they were married, I've heard tell that the house was a wonder. It was full of stores of fine linen, and had a cellar of wine that there wasn't the like of in all the Canton. Old Zachary loved good wine, and he had been in France in his youth, and he had got used to many fine things that our people don't know of, nor care for. Oh, 'afford,' yes; it isn't for that. But who would stay in the house? After the old man died, the last servant went away. The Raben-wirthin terrifies every one. And then, as I told you, they do say that the house is haunted. Not a soul in these parts would go into it after dark."

The man rambled on garrulously when once his tongue was loosened. I was struck by his inability to comprehend my horror and amazement at the picture he presented to me, of this household at the Raven. Of course it was an affliction for a family to have madness in its blood. Yes; the Frau Dietrich had been unfortunate. Her youngest child, the cretin, was the worst trouble, perhaps, because they could not make him work. He sat by the fire all winter, and in the sun all summer, and

chanted a kind of jargon of his own, that sounded almost like a litany when you were at a little distance. But the others—well, after all, they could do the work of four. And they were mostly quiet enough. Some people said that they had seen and heard them fighting over their food. But the Raben-wirthin kept them in order. They were terrified at the sight of her.

For my part, I was filled with horrible apprehensions as to what would be revealed to our eyes when we should succeed in getting into the house. The wild unearthly yellings and laughter had received an unexpected elucidation from the watchman's story! But those cries of pain, that sound of struggling, what did they mean? I longed to break down the gloomy doors and let the air of Heaven into the closed-up chambers, even although that air were the wild blast of the Föhn. The waters were rising rapidly. Already the Schwarzbach was so high that to cross it a man must have waded more than knee deep. And so rapid and violent was the current that it would have been almost impossible to keep one's feet in the midst of it. Retreat down the valley was thus cut off. In the direction of Falkenau the way was still open. But how long it would remain so, no man could say. At length we perceived lights approaching on the road, and in my excitement I jumped up and shouted to the men to hasten, although, as the watchman quietly told me, it was impossible for my voice to be heard at any distance, above the noise of the gale and the flood.

The party from Falkenau consisted of seven or eight men, three of whom carried lanterns, and the others had ropes and axes and other tools, the use of which I could not conjecture, until the watchman explained it to me. There was some felled timber piled up at no great distance from the Raven, and it might be possible, by lashing trunks of trees together and fastening them to the banks of the Schwarzbach, to stem and turn the current of the rushing waters, so as to keep the house in safety. The most imminent danger sometimes arose from the floods eating away the soil and thus undermining the foundations of a dwelling-house. And how quickly and completely the solid earth can be absolutely licked up by the waters, and disappear, I had seen in a mountain flood once before.

"How is it going, Alois?" asked one of the Falkenauers, addressing the watchman.

His answer was not very encouraging.

He had been on the watch since nine o'clock; it was now just past midnight, and the waters had risen fearfully during that short time. And when he told the men of the dead goat that he had seen carried down by the Schwarzbach, they looked anxious and frightened. Before attempting to stem the current, I insisted that they should enter the Raven inn, and endeavour to rescue its inhabitants. When I told them what I had heard there that night, some of them were inclined to make light of it, saying that screechings and cries had often been heard there; and that it was only the "crazy Dietrichs" quarrelling. One man muttered something about spirits that haunted the place, and advised that the priest should be sent for. But the most authoritative of the party, who proved to be the village blacksmith, agreed with me, that no time ought to be lost in getting into the house. He shook his head ominously, and declared that he had said, many a year ago, that some dreadful thing would happen if that houseful of lunatics was left, with no one but the old woman to keep them in order.

"She treats 'em very cruelly, you see," said the blacksmith, who was called Lorenz, "and though they're afraid of her, they might take an opportunity to be revenged. Crazy folk are cunning."

At length it was settled that we should divide our forces. Six of the men set to work to drag the felled timber towards the bank of the Schwarzbach, whilst Alois the watchman, Lorenz, and I, determined to break into the house, if we could get access to it in no other way. We went round into the yard and attacked the back door, as I had noticed that it was less massive and strong than that beneath the porch. We knocked and shouted with all our might, but in vain. Then Lorenz, wielding a great sledge-hammer in his brawny arm, bade us step back out of the way, and struck a blow on the panel of the door that smashed it completely in. The old iron lock and hinges remained firm, but the wood was rotten, and crumbled away in fragments. When the crash was over, we waited silently for a few seconds, in the expectation of hearing some movement inside the house, but there was none. All at once we heard a shrill long-drawn note, and then another and another, with a melancholy inflection monotonously repeated. It was the idiot boy chanting his litany. We all three drew back with a shudder. Even Alois crossed himself nervously. The effect of

that shrill voice, singing, unconscious of danger without or death within, was unspeakably terrible.

Then Lorenz, clearing away and breaking down the ruins of the door with arms and shoulders, forced his way into the house and we followed him.

We first made for the kitchen, the door of which was open. Here, in front of the still glowing embers on the hearth, sat the idiot, nodding at the fire, and chanting shrilly his unmeaning jargon. He grinned at us and pointed to the fire, and showed no symptoms of surprise or terror.

"What, Hänseli," said the watchman, going up to him, "where is thy mother? Where are the others?"

The boy neither answered nor seemed to comprehend, but grinned and nodded as before.

"It's no use to question him," said the blacksmith, looking round the kitchen by the light of the lantern he carried. "Why, there," he cried suddenly, "there is the girl!"

She was there, sitting upon the heap of rags where I had previously seen her, near to the pile of firewood, and regarding us sullenly. Questioning her, however, was as vain as questioning the boy. She either could not or would not reply; and Alois whispered that she was possessed with a dumb devil.

It was necessary to get these two out of the house. Every minute increased the danger of its being undermined by the flood; and it seemed clear that, if left to themselves, the idiot and his sister would simply sit still and perish. The boy, Hänseli as they called him, was docile enough, and allowed himself to be led away, unhesitatingly. But the girl at first refused to move, and it was not until Alois had hit on the expedient of saying that her mother was calling for her, and would be angry if she delayed, that the girl followed her brother and Alois out of the house. Hänseli had no sooner got into the courtyard than he hastened with his shuffling pace towards the door of a cowshed or stable, and showed some anxiety to have it opened.

"The creature has more sense than we thought," observed Lorenz. "No doubt there are some beasts there, and he wants to save them."

But it soon proved that such was not the boy's object. There were, indeed, a couple of goats in the stable, but of these he took no heed. He went straight to a



heap of straw at the farther end, and then we perceived that the eldest son, Rudolph, was stretched there fast asleep. His pinched features and gaunt form looked pitifully haggard, as he lay in the profound slumber of utter weariness. The men shook him by the shoulder and called in his ears, and he opened a pair of wild eyes and rolled them from one to another, evidently without any recognition, until he caught sight of the idiot boy, when he at once rose up on to his feet, and confronted us fiercely. The blacksmith addressed him in a quiet tone of command.

"Come, Rudolph," said he, "the Schwarzbach is rising. We're afraid the house may come down. They are lashing tree trunks to the bank of the stream, and we want you to help us."

The young man looked eagerly at the speaker for a moment, and then there came from his mouth the most hollow, unearthly, and horrible voice I have ever heard emitted by a human creature. It seemed as if the act of speaking were so unusual as to be painful.

"Is the devil drowned?" he asked.

"Jesu Maria!" answered Alois, crossing himself several times in rapid succession.

"Come with me, and we will see," answered Lorenz, with a good deal of self-possession. "You have a good strong arm of your own, lad. Come, and help us."

"Can he not tell us where his mother is?" said I, detaining Lorenz as he was about to leave the courtyard.

"Oh, what's the use of asking him?" interposed the watchman, Alois, who was evidently afraid of the young man, and anxious to get rid of him. "Any way, you see that the old woman can't be murdered. There's no one to murder her. No creature lives in the Raven, nor has lived there for years, but Frau Dietrich and her brood. And it's clear that all three have been downstairs, in the dens they sleep in, all night."

When I reiterated my account of the struggle and the cries I had heard, he declared either that I must have been dreaming, or that the ghosts had made the noise, or that the brothers and sister had been fighting and quarrelling, as was their wont. It was true that Rudolph, Theresa, and the idiot had been found in apparent quietude in their usual lairs (beds, they could not be termed); but nothing Alois could say would avail to persuade me out of the evidence of my senses. Besides,

those sounds had come from above, not from below. Who had made them?

"Come out to the others with me now," whispered Lorenz, plucking me significantly by the sleeve. "We will return afterwards to the house, and search for the old woman."

Outside on the borders of the stream there was much movement and confusion. The number of workers had been increased by a considerable accession of villagers from Falkenau. Lanterns glimmered and glanced here and there, but they showed dim and yellow in the pure light of the full moon, which now poured her rays on the scene, as if to show the extent of the danger and devastation. The Schwarzbach was terrible to look upon. It rushed along, a foaming, raging flood, bearing on its rapid tide numberless wrecks and fragments of mountain dwellings, and the bodies of animals from the high pastures. The wooden paling, which had surrounded the garden of the Raven inn, was gone. The sheds and stabling at the back were tottering and cracking, with every pulse of the waters which now beat against their walls. The old house still stood firm, for the course of the Schwarzbach in that direction had been a little checked by the piles of timber lashed to the bank. Among the workers, the lunatic Rudolph displayed prodigious activity. His strength was amazing, and he dragged great beams of wood and tree-trunks to the water's brink with frenzied eagerness. The idiot boy stood near, smiling, clapping his hands, and shrilling his litany louder and louder as the waves rose higher and spread a wider ruin.

"I wanted to have those young ones safe out of the way," said the blacksmith. "Now we must search for the Rabenwirthin, and lose no time about it. If she is alive and is to be saved, every minute is of value." He called two young men from the crowd to accompany us. They were his assistants at the forge, and were stalwart fellows, who carried each an axe and some cord, and had been helping to make the dam. "We shall not need these men," said I, "and they can, surely, be of more use at their post here!" But Lorenz shook his head. "We don't know what we may find," he answered.

We re-entered the house by the broken door at the back, and hastened through the passage on the ground-floor. Lorenz carried a lantern, as did one of the other men. This latter fellow pointed signifi-

cantly to a stream of muddy water that was flowing across the stone-flagged passage from the yard. It was not an eighth of an inch deep, and was moving sluggishly, but it portended worse things. "Hasten!" cried the blacksmith, and we rushed up the staircase after him. We opened the doors of one room after another along the corridor. They were empty, most of them unfurnished, all dirty and neglected. The door of the room I had occupied was still locked. The key was on the outside. We looked in. It was just as I had left it. "There is no story above this," said the young man who carried a lantern. "We have seen all the rooms. Perhaps the old witch has ridden off on a broomstick."

But there were rooms above, as I well knew. And after a minute's search we found a low door in one angle at the darkest end of the corridor. This door opened into a steep staircase, leading to some garrets in the roof. Hardly had I set my feet on the first step, when a door was violently opened, and there emerged from the darkness into the light of our lanterns, the figure of the hostess of the Raven!

We all paused and looked up at her as she stood on the top of the ladder-like staircase. Her hideous face was distorted with rage. Her grey locks were tossed in wild confusion round her head and neck. The dark jacket she wore was rent and torn away from her yellow throat, and her sinewy hands were covered with recent scars.

"What do you here?" she croaked, as we stood speechless before so revolting an apparition. "Do you know this is my house? Mine! Have you broken in like thieves in the night?"

"Frau Dietrich," said the blacksmith, "we have no time for quarrelling or argument. If we have broken into your house, you must guess why we have done so——"

She started back and clutched at a great knotted stick which leant against the wall behind her, and which we had not seen before. "Go back!" she shrieked almost inarticulate with fury. "Go back, or it will be worse for you!"

"Woman," cried I, "have you not heard the horn? Have you not felt the Föhn? The Schwarzbach has overflowed. We are here to save you. Your daughter and your sons are in safety. Come with us."

She seemed surprised, and irresolute for a moment. Lorenz took advantage of her hesitation. He stepped up and seized her wrist.

"Come," said he, "there is no time to lose. The house may go down at any moment and bury us in the ruins."

"Let it go, the old house, and all that is in it!" she muttered, with a wild toss of her dishevelled head. But she seemed disposed to accompany Lorenz. She had, indeed, descended a couple of steps, he still holding her by the wrist, when the blacksmith bade his two apprentices take care of the Raben-wirthin, and bring her safely out of the house, and whispered to me to remain with him for a moment, he had a search to make. The woman's quick ear caught the whisper. She shook herself free of him in an instant, and with one bound she was back at the head of the staircase and confronting us ferociously. "You dogs," she panted out, "you accursed hounds, you are trying to deceive me. Leave my house, begone! Let it stand or fall, it shall not harbour such as you. If there is law in the canton you shall repent this."

"Best not talk of law, mother Dietrich," returned the blacksmith resolutely. "I tell you I have my reasons for looking into these garrets. And by Heaven I'll not quit the house till I've done so. Let me pass."

She aimed a sudden blow at him with the knotted stick, but he had anticipated her attack, and avoided the blow by a quick side movement. Then he rushed upon her and pinioned her arms to her sides. Powerful man as he was, he could not hold her single-handed, so violent were her struggles, so astonishing her strength. But the two apprentices came to his assistance and succeeded in binding her arms with the ropes they carried. It all passed quicker than I can tell it. "Stay and guard her for a moment," shouted Lorenz to his men. "And you, sir, come with me!" I followed him to the head of the stairs and into a low garret, the massive door of which was open. He held up his lantern and looked around. "My God!" he cried, "it is worse than I thought."

I had paused at the threshold, being absolutely beaten back by the intolerable stench and closeness of the air. But on hearing the blacksmith's exclamation I advanced; and this is what I saw:—

A low garret with a sloping roof in which was one hole to admit light, unglazed, but defended by iron bars. Walls foul and blackened with the dirt of years. A floor heaped with dust, and filth unspeakable. No chair, no table, no bed;

but on the floor in one corner a ragged mattress which I would not have given a dog to lie on, and on the mattress a human form.

"What is it?"

Lorenz looked round at me as I asked the question. "It was a woman," said he.

"Lord have mercy on us!"

"Was? Is she dead?"

We knelt down beside the creature on the mattress and looked more closely. It was a young woman. God forbid I should ever see her like again! Her body was—not clothed, but—barely covered by a single garment of indescribable vileness and raggedness. Her feet and legs were naked, as were her arms; and their emaciation surpassed anything I could have conceived compatible with life. Her dark hair was cropped close to her head, and her eyebrows and eyelashes, also very dark, enhanced the ghastly pallor of her face and forehead, on one side of which there was a stain of clotted blood. "Look here," whispered Lorenz (we had both instinctively lowered our voices), "look at this!"

He showed me a band round her middle, to which was attached an iron chain. The other end of it had been fixed to a ring in the wall; but the place where the ring had been, was all broken away. The plaster was shivered, and the beam to which the ring had been riveted was splintered. Some strong effort had torn the ring from its place in the rotting wall. The woman's shoulders were covered with bruises and scars, some of old date, some freshly inflicted. Altogether she was an object of such pity and horror as I had never imagined, much less seen.

"It is what I suspected, only worse," said Lorenz. "There were stories going about at the time, that Rosel, the eldest of these Dietrichs, was never sent away at all, but was kept shut up here after she went raving mad. But no one knew for certain. And of late the thing was forgotten, and the younger generation knew nothing about it. But you see how it is! The unfortunate, miserable creature has been kept here chained like a dog, starved, beaten; her own child, sir! Her own flesh and blood! And now that she-devil has killed her."

I turned sick and faint, and must have become suddenly pale, for the blacksmith put out his arm to support me.

"Don't mind me, man. It will pass off in a moment. But, see! let us try—is there nothing to be done? Is she quite dead?"

I put my hand upon her heart, and felt it still beat, though feebly. She was insensible, but there was a tremulous fluttering of the eyelids now and then, as if she were about to lift them. If we could get some aid, I thought we might still save her. But how was it to be accomplished? If we remained much longer there, our own lives might be endangered by the flood. As we still hesitated, kneeling by the mattress, she all at once opened her eyes fully and looked up. Her glance had no madness in it. It was pathetic, wondering, but not mad.

"Don't be afraid, Rosel," said the blacksmith, bending over her; "no one shall hurt you."

At the same instant, a change in the expression of her face made us look round. There, in the doorway, stood the Rabenwirthin. Her violent expostulations, and their own curiosity, had induced the two men who guarded her to return with her to the garret; and there she stood between them, with her hands bound together by ropes, gazing at the miserable creature on the pallet. The girl's lips moved. A brighter light came into her sunken eyes. She was so weak that her voice was the merest whisper; still, we could hear the words she said.

"Rosel's so tired. Mother, take Rosel."

The old woman made a movement forward, but the men beside her held her back.

"Let me go!" she cried, in a strangled voice that would have been almost a shriek if she had not violently controlled it. "Let me go to her!"

"You fiend, do you want to finish your murdering work?" said Lorenz, placing himself between her and the pallet. The woman fell on her knees, and a great convulsion shook her whole body, ending in a storm of sobs, amidst which she poured out a stream of broken sentences.

"I did not mean to kill her!" she cried. "I have not killed her. You shall not say so. It was only to save myself. She had torn away the ring, and she sprang upon me from behind, and I struggled with her and struck her down. She was raving then—like a wild beast: the devil possessed her. You don't know what it was to bear that all alone, and tell no one, and keep her from doing the horrible things that—but, oh! she knows me now. She knows her own name. She has not known me for twelve years. Think of it! And, whenever she uttered the word 'mother,' she screamed, and cursed, and tore. Oh! let me go to her. You may leave my



hands bound, if you like. As true as there is a God in Heaven, I won't hurt her! Hark! she's crying for me. My own child, Lorenz! My child, that I bore and suckled—not that devil that came and took possession of her spirit. Rosel! Rosel!”

She staggered upon to her feet again; and the blacksmith, without a word, took out his knife and cut the cords round her wrists.

“Mind,” said he, “if you hurt a hair of her head, I'll fell you like a beast to be slaughtered.”

She took no heed of him or his words. She was down on the mattress beside her daughter, holding the poor wounded head on her breast. The dying girl smiled and closed her eyes.

“Mother, hush Rosel to sleep,” she murmured.

The blow which had destroyed her life had restored her reason; but it was the reason of a little child. The intervening years of youth and womanhood had been cancelled by the searing fire of madness.

“Rosel! Rosel! where have you been, my Rosel? Why has the fiend left you, and the curse been taken away, if it is too late?”

The wretched woman's own brain seemed to be giving way under the pressure of this tragedy. Her daughter lay still and placid in the mother's arms, who rocked her and crooned over her as if she had been an infant.

“For God's sake,” cried I, “let us get them both away if possible. We can carry the girl downstairs, and get shelter, and help for her at Falkenau.”

“Yes, come,” said Lorenz, down whose rugged face the tears were streaming. “Let us lift Rosel on the mattress as she is.”

At this moment the girl suddenly reared herself into a sitting posture, and stared intently at one corner of the room. “Mother,” she said, speaking more strongly and clearly than she had yet done, “Come with Rosel. Don't let us stay here, it's so cold and dark. Out there, there's a bright light—oh, so bright! and there's father! Mother, take Rosel!”

She fell back into her mother's arms, dead.

The blacksmith's men came and pulled Lorenz by the sleeve. “It's no use staying here,” they said. “We can do no good, and shall lose our own lives for nothing. Don't you feel how the house shakes? And there's the horn again! Alois is blowing to warn us.” They turned and rushed down the stairs without further

parley. Lorenz and I endeavoured with all our force to drag away the Raben-wirthing from the dead body of her child. It was impossible. She lay face downwards on the mattress, with her arms tightly clasped about the body, and her head upon its breast. She would neither move nor speak, but opposed all her singular strength to our efforts to remove her. A great shout came up from the crowd without. The house was tottering. It was worse than useless to remain. Alone we could do nothing. Horrible as it seemed to leave the wretched woman there to die, the instinct of self-preservation hastened our steps away from that loathsome scene of horror. When we reached the first floor, we heard shouts again from the crowd in the road. I ran into the room I had slept in and looked out of the window. “This way, this way,” shouted the people. “The courtyard at the back is flooded. Jump for your lives!”

I remembered the conduit which had served me to descend before. I called to Lorenz to follow me, and in a few seconds we were standing side by side in the road. “Run!” cried Alois the watchman, from a distant knoll where he was standing. I hardly understood the direction, but Lorenz pulled me along with him at a headlong speed. “We must get clear of the ruins,” he panted. Scarcely had he uttered the words before a horrible crackling was heard. I stopped and looked back. Turbid, foam-crested waves were swirling round the house, and beating against it. The temporary dam of timber had been swept away like so many straws. The ground on which the house stood was being swallowed up by the devouring waters. Another minute, and the building reeled from roof to basement, toppled slowly to one side, and sank down as if it were engulfed by an earthquake. The moon shone brilliantly, and the voice of the idiot boy was heard chanting in shrill delight, as the roof-tree of the Raven inn was whirled past us in the raging flood.

NEXT WEEK WILL BE COMMENCED  
A NEW SERIAL STORY,

ENTITLED,

**HALVES,**

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AUTHOR OF

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